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Planning Commission Approves Creative Home on Hillside

By Sophie Braccini



Graphic provided

The Moraga Planning Commission decided on April 15 to grant conditional use and hillside development permits to the house proposed by architect James Wright on a

hillside with a 52 percent slope at 1800 Donald Dr. in Moraga. Despite opposition from some of the neighbors, the commission determined that the three-level, two-story futuristic

building would be concealed in the existing vegetation and anchored in bedrock.

"I am concerned that this development could create a precedent," said commission chair Frank Compelli. The undeveloped lot on which the home is proposed was created in the '60s; planning director Shawna Brekke-Read confirmed that such a lot would be considered non-conforming today and would not be approved, mostly because of the slope. Developments are not permitted in Moraga on slopes that are more than 20 percent, unless a hillside development permit is granted; the commission found Wright's design elegant and safe enough to approve the special permit. ... continued on page A11

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Olsen Honored



Dick Olsen at home in Moraga. Photo Sophie Braccini

Dick Olsen was recently named Moraga's Citizen of the Year for 2013. Olsen is a multi-talented gentleman who has served in many volunteer capacities for the town, starting in the '70s as a founding member of Citizens Incorporating Moraga and serving on the town's first Design Review Board. He was a Moraga Fire District Commissioner for 12 years; most recently he was the chair of the Revenue Enhancement Committee. He will be honored May 3 with a dinner at the Soda Center on the Saint Mary's College campus. The program starts at 6 p.m. Tickets for the event are \$45 per person. Reservations are required and can be made by sending a check to Kiwanis of Moraga Valley, 8 Thune Ave., Moraga, CA 94556. S. Braccini

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